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1974/08/09

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

9 Aug 74

TOP SECRET

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Huang Chen, Chief of the Liaison Office of the People's Republic of China
Chi Ch'ao-chu, Interpreter

Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
Winston Lord, Director of Policy Planning,
Department of State
Arthur W. Hummel, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs,
Department of State
Richard H. Solomon, Senior Staff Member, NSC

DATE, TIME,
AND PLACE: August 9, 1974; 4:50 p.m. - 5:20 p.m.
The White House

SUBJECT: The Secretary's Reassurances to the PRC Upon Mr. Ford's Assumption of the Presidency

Secretary Kissinger: Welcome, Mr. Ambassador. I've just started eating again. You ruined my diet.

Ambassador Huang: You didn't eat very much that evening.

Secretary Kissinger: Only three or four spoonfuls of each course of an eight or nine course dinner!

Ambassador Huang: First let me extend congratulations to you on continuing as Secretary of State. Please also convey my congratulations to President Ford on taking over.

Secretary Kissinger: I'm sure he'll be pleased to hear your congratulations. You may have an opportunity for a few minutes to tell him in person.

Ambassador Huang: I'd be glad to have an opportunity to do so.

Secretary Kissinger: In fact, I asked for the meeting to be held here in order to have this opportunity. [The Secretary checks on the telephone regarding the status of the Presidential meeting.]

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The President asked me to see you in order to tell you on his behalf -- he'll be telling you this himself -- that all discussions, understandings, and commitments made with President Nixon, as well as by me on behalf of President Nixon, are confirmed.

He also has written to Chairman Mao in a letter which will be delivered in Peking. [The Secretary hands Ambassador Huang a copy of this letter, and a letter from him to Premier Chou En-lai. See the end of this memcon for copies.]

Mr. Chi: So Ambassador Bruce will convey this letter in Peking, and there is no need for us to send it?

Secretary Kissinger: Here is also a letter from me to the Prime Minister. This is not being delivered in Peking.

Mr. Chi: So you would like us to convey this letter to Peking? Let me briefly translate for the Ambassador the contents of the two letters. [There is a brief break while Mr. Chi translates the two letters for the Ambassador.]

Ambassador Huang: I will speedily convey this message of yours, and also I would like to briefly say the following: We fully understand the present difficulty facing the American government. We will not forget the contribution President Nixon made in opening up Sino-U.S. relations, and in publishing the Shanghai Communique. We express our appreciation of the intent of the new U.S. administration to carry out the Shanghai Communique. Of course, we were very pleased that Dr. Kissinger will stay on as Secretary of State.

Secretary Kissinger: I can't say that for all my colleagues at the State Department. Winston Lord likes to suffer. Besides, he has a Chinese wife. She keeps him disciplined. Without her I'd get only half the amount of work out of him.

Ambassador Huang: Good.

So as I said, we are pleased that you are remaining as Secretary of State. It insures that both sides will act according to the Shanghai Communique. I am sure that you know we will continue according to the Shanghai Communique.

Secretary Kissinger: As far as we are concerned, all procedures are the same, all assurances will be maintained.

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Of course, our China policy is not a domestic issue. But President Ford will have the broadest base of political support in this country which has existed for a long time.

Ambassador Huang: We were happy to note in the past that this policy received bipartisan support.

I heard that today you have met forty or fifty ambassadors.

Secretary Kissinger: No -- well, very few we see alone. Most are seen in groups. I only receive Liaison Office chiefs alone.

Ambassador Huang: Very good. There are not so many Liaison Office chiefs -- although it makes me feel a bit isolated.

Secretary Kissinger: The fact that I see you alone is not a bureaucratic matter. It reflects the importance we attach to our relationship.

Ambassador Huang: There is also this advantage [to being a Liaison Office chief]: I can invite the Secretary to dinner.

Secretary Kissinger: Right. I only go to Liaison Offices. Only the Indian Embassy has licked this problem. They invite some other individual as the guest of honor -- like Senator Fulbright -- so that when I receive an invitation I am embarrassed to refuse.

Ambassador Huang: So if in the future other embassies find out this method they will do what the Indians have done.

Secretary Kissinger: Right. So we keep it secret.

Your deputy is now in China?

Ambassador Huang: Yes. He was here for quite some time, so now he has gone back. I hope to go back next.

Secretary Kissinger: I only ask that the next time you go, don't go right after I have seen you -- it gives me a complex.

Ambassador Huang: But what can I do? I am a soldier. I obey orders.

Secretary Kissinger: If this is our only problem, we will do very well.

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The President told me today that he was among the first officials to visit China after the President's trip -- at any rate he was in a very early group.

Mr. Lord: The Mansfield-Scott delegation preceeded the Boggs-Ford group.

Ambassador Huang: It was most unfortunate that Mr. Boggs lost his life.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, he was a remarkable man.

[At this point General Scowcroft entered the room to escort the Secretary, Ambassador Huang, and Mr. Chi to see the President for a visit of about twenty minutes.]